



SAFETY AND ASSURANCE

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Author/Role	Jim Holden, Senior Health and Safety Adviser
Date of Risk Assessment (if applicable)	N/A
Date of Equality Impact Assessment	Refer to EIA HS Policy
Date of Impact Assessment (commenced)	N/A
Date of Impact Assessment (concluded)	N/A
Quality Control (name)	Julie Harkins, Deputy Head of Safety and Assurance
Authorised (name and date)	Julie Harkins – June 2021
Date for Next Review	1 April 2022

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Change	Who	When
1.0	First version issued as Health and Safety Policy	Karen Lockhart, Head of Health and Safety	05/06/2013
1.0	First version issued as Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	08/10/2014
2.0	Reviewed and updated	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	11/12/2015
3.0	Reviewed and updated	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	08/06/2018
4.0	Reviewed and updated	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	03/04/2019
5.0	Reviewed and updated, issued as Health and Safety Policy	Jim Holden, Senior H&S Adviser	09/07/2021



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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TRAINING, SAFETY AND ASSURANCE

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) recognises the beneficial impact that a positive health and safety culture can have on the Service.

We are committed to the promotion of sensible and proportionate health and safety, recognising the need to balance operational risk control measures against firefighter and public safety.

To achieve this, the SFRS is committed to continuous improvement in all aspects of health and safety.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The SFRS recognises that our staff are central to the delivery of our service and we are fully committed to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of staff and those affected by our activities.

We will:

- As an absolute minimum acceptable standard, comply with the content and spirit of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and all associated applicable legislation, regulations and guidance;
- Ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of our staff and other people who may be affected by our acts or omissions;
- Provide visible leadership to support the safety value of the SFRS;
- Make provision for the health and safety requirements of staff who may be at specific risk, e.g. pregnant women, young people, staff with a disability or those returning to work following ill-health or injury;
- Develop, implement and promote proactive, sensible and proportionate health and safety arrangements which align to relevant standards and guidance such as the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) HS(G) 65 'Managing for Health and Safety';

- Employ a risk based approach to ensure effective management of health and safety through commitment, co-operative effort, communication and engagement with all SFRS stakeholders including staff and their representatives;
- Investigate all health and safety events to prevent reoccurrence and drive improvement in health and safety management;
- Protect and enhance staff safety within the workplace with recognition to the higher risk, dynamic and often complex environments our firefighters encounter at operational incidents;
- Integrate the management of health and safety into all aspects of work undertaken by SFRS or others undertaking work on behalf of the SFRS;
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure staff have the skills and knowledge needed to safely perform their role;
- Provide assets and equipment which are suitable for the task and fit for purpose; and
- Develop and implement robust monitoring, audit and review against agreed objectives and targets.

We aim to:

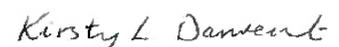
- Prevent injury or ill-health, from work related hazards, through the identification and management of associated risks;
- Reduce workplace injury and illness; and
- Continually improve our health and safety performance by raising awareness and learning lessons through the early reporting and investigation of all health and safety events.

Signature (Chief Officer):



Date: 24 JUNE 2021

Signature (Chair of Board):



Date: 24 June 2021

3. FIREFIGHTER SAFETY

The SFRS recognises that operational incidents present the highest risk environment encountered by its staff. Whilst there is a degree of foreseeable risk, it is acknowledged that each incident will have its own specific hazards and associated risks due to unique and unforeseeable environmental factors. To manage this risk to firefighters, the SFRS endorses and promotes the [Health, Safety and Welfare Framework for the Operational Environment](#) and the safe person principles contained within.

To secure these fundamental principles of effective health and safety management and safe and effective operations, SFRS will ensure our staff have support through a combination of the following:

Organisational Responsibilities:

- Providing a robust and effective recruitment and selection process for new employees and promotions;
- Ensuring suitable arrangements for the acquisition and maintenance of competence through training and development;
- Ensuring suitable arrangements for the maintenance and recording of the incident command skill and competence of supervisors, managers and commanders;
- Providing guidance and Safe Systems of Work (SSOW) for operational incidents;
- Providing and maintaining suitable appliances, equipment and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required for operational incidents;
- Gathering and reviewing operational risk information including post-event analysis; and
- Ensuring the provision of sufficient welfare arrangements.

Individual Responsibilities:

- Ensuring competency to perform assigned tasks is maintained and staff are self-disciplined to work sensibly and responsibly within the command and control arrangements;
- Recognising physical limitations to perform a task and personal limitations in knowledge and experience and to ensure that they have the necessary information to perform safely and effectively;
- Being observant and constantly aware of their situation for personal safety and the safety of team members;
- Being decisive about hazards and risks and communicating safety information to supervisors and commanders and where appropriate offering alternative courses of action;
- Mitigating risk by taking action to reduce personal and team exposure to risk;
- Communicating unexpected developments within the operational environment to support team members, supervisors and commanders; and
- Recognising hazards and their role in command and control arrangements to provide relevant and timely information about unknown or unexpected developments.

The principles outlined above ensure that operational personnel make informed professional risk based decisions that are reasonable, logical and defensible.

The SFRS will also encourage a culture of delegated authority, empowerment and acceptance of responsibility ensuring systems and processes are in place to effectively prepare Incident Commanders at every level in incident command and management of risk.

The SFRS is a learning organisation and will collate, review and analyse incident information using Operational Assurance (OA) processes and health and safety event investigation.

4. ORGANISATION OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

This section outlines the responsibilities of all stakeholders to ensure our commitment to health and safety is being achieved.

The Board

The Board will be responsible for:

- Providing strategic direction, support and guidance on the management of health and safety within the service;
- Ensuring that health and safety is given the necessary due attention when making board decisions;
- Scrutinising health and safety performance;
- Holding the Chief Officer and Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) to account on health and safety matters; and
- Promoting a positive health and safety culture.

Chief Officer

The Chief Officer is responsible for the discharging of the SFRS legal obligations.

To achieve this, the Chief Officer will:

- Determine and resource the strategic direction of health and safety throughout the Service;
- Detail the SFRS organisational structure through which this Policy, Health and Safety Management Systems and Health and Safety Improvement Plans are implemented; and
- Always promote a positive safety culture.

Deputy Chief Officer

In the absence of the Chief Officer, the Deputy Chief Officer is responsible for discharging the legal obligations in all areas of health and safety matters.

Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)

The SLT are responsible for:

- Developing a positive safety culture within SFRS by ensuring that health and safety is integrated into all SFRS business processes and key decisions;
- Ensuring the availability of resources to meet the requirements of this policy; and
- Visibly demonstrating a commitment to health and safety through the promoting, implementing and monitoring of associated SFRS arrangements.

National Safety and Assurance Board (NSAB)

The NSAB is responsible for:

- Assisting the Chief Officer in the discharge of their health and safety responsibilities;
- Determining the strategic direction of health and safety matters and operational readiness and effectiveness;
- Seeking endorsement from and advising the SLT on current or emerging risk as required;
- Reviewing and monitoring of health and safety performance including operational performance; and
- Promoting positive aspects and identifying areas for improvement.

Director of Training, Safety and Assurance

In addition to the responsibilities listed under ACOs, Directors and Heads of Function, the Director of Training, Safety and Assurance has a delegated duty to act on behalf of the Chief Officer in relation to health and safety matters and is responsible for:

- Promoting and monitoring the development of the Health and Safety Policy, the associated Health and Safety Management System, Health and Safety Improvement Plans and all associated arrangements to ensure the effective management of health and safety risk; and
- Ensuring that the Board and SLT are advised of aspects of health and safety performance.

Director of People and Organisational Development (POD)

In addition to those responsibilities listed under ACO, Directors and Heads of Function, the Director of POD has a delegated duty to act on behalf of the Chief Officer in relation to health and safety matters and is responsible for:

- Ensuring Health and Wellbeing undertake a programme of health surveillance for all relevant staff;
- Ensure Health and Wellbeing undertake a programme of medical and fitness assessment to support Firefighter safety;
- Initiating a risk assessment process for any health conditions that may impact on staff ability to safely undertake a role; and
- Implementing a system to monitor exposure to workplace hazards, e.g. noise, vibration, hazardous substances.

Strategic Managers (ACO, Directors, Heads of Function, Department Managers, Area Commanders)

Strategic Managers are responsible for:

- Promoting, resourcing, implementing and monitoring the Health and Safety Policy, Management Arrangements and Improvement Plans within their area of responsibility;
- Appointing Safety and Assurance Co-ordinators (SACs) and Safety and Assurance Liaison Officers (SALOs);
- Ensuring SACs and SALOs progress the completion of Health and Safety Improvement Plans, the implementation of the Health and Safety Management System and ensuring health and safety considerations are integrated into all management processes and decisions; and
- Reviewing performance and compliance with health and safety legislation to ensure continuous improvement and constantly work towards an improved health and safety standard and safety culture.

Middle/Supervisory Managers (Group Commanders, Station Commanders, etc.)

Middle/Supervisory Managers are responsible for:

- The implementation, monitoring and review of the Health and Safety Policy, Management Arrangements and Health and Safety Improvement Plan within their area of responsibility;
- Ensuring health and safety is considered in all work activities and that risk controls are considered in all stages of the business process; and
- Consulting with Trade Unions or staff representatives on health and safety matters.

Safety and Assurance Function (Health and Safety)

The Safety and Assurance Function's principal aim is to promote the health and safety of every member of SFRS staff.

The Head of Function is deemed to be the SFRS 'competent person' as required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and has primary responsibility for:

- Developing, maintaining, auditing and reviewing Health and Safety Policy, the associated Health and Safety Management System, Health and Safety Improvement Plans and any other supporting arrangements within the SFRS;
- Providing sensible and proportionate health and safety advice and guidance to the SFRS Board, Chief Officer, SLT members and SFRS staff as necessary;
- Developing, measuring and reviewing health and safety performance indicators and producing management reports which assist in the undertaking of risk based decisions; and
- Liaising with internal and external stakeholders, including Trade Unions and the HSE.

Safety and Assurance Co-ordinators (SAC)

The SAC has delegated authority from the Strategic Manager and is responsible for:

- Promoting continuous improvement in health and safety;
- Appointing and co-ordinating SALOs from within each of their Local Senior Officer (LSO)/Directorate areas;
- Co-ordinating the completion of Health and Safety Improvement Plans and actions from the National Safety and Assurance Board, through a formalised meeting structure including health and safety staff and Trade Union Representation; and
- Monitoring the application and effectiveness of health and safety measures across their area of responsibility and addressing any areas of improvement including the completion of health and safety investigations.

Safety and Assurance Liaison Officers (SALOs)

The SALO – must be of Department Manager/Group Commander level – is responsible for:

- Facilitating the completion of all actions stemming from the Health and Safety Improvement Plan;
- Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of health and safety measures taken and addressing any areas of improvement;
- Monitoring and, where required, undertaking health and safety investigations to ensure lessons to be learnt are identified and improvements made;
- Liaising with the Health and Safety Department to ensure the achievement of SFRS health and safety standards; and
- Providing management reports on health and safety performance and emerging risk in their areas of responsibility.

Employees

Whilst at work, every SFRS employee is responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of their own health and safety and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions;
- Co-operating with the SFRS by complying with the Service's Health and Safety Policy and associated arrangements, including periodic inspections, SSOW, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Incident Command, Risk Information and associated training;
- Not intentionally or recklessly interfering with or misusing anything provided in the interest of health and safety;
- Immediately reporting any damage or defects to premises, vehicles or equipment;
- Advising their line manager of any situation that represents serious or immediate danger because of any shortfalls in health and safety measures;
- Recognising their limitations to perform a task;
- Reporting all events including accidents, near misses, hazards, cases of ill health and dangerous occurrences;
- Immediately reporting to their line manager any new or changing medical condition and/or medication taken that may affect their ability to fulfil their duties safely;

- Only operating SFRS equipment they have been authorised to use and that they are trained to operate;
- Maintaining good housekeeping principles and adopting clean and tidy working methods;
- Completing relevant training and maintaining competence;
- Being familiar with the emergency procedures, including first aid and emergency fire action plans, e.g. escape routes and assembly points, relative to their place of work;
- Adopting and maintaining a proactive approach to their personal fitness (operational staff); and
- Maintaining situational awareness regarding personal safety and the safety of others.

Trade Unions

SFRS is committed to working in partnership with employees and will consult with employees through their relevant Trade Union Representatives. If an employee is not represented by a Trade Union, employees may communicate health and safety issues directly with their line manager.

Trade Unions are responsible for:

- Promoting a positive health, safety and wellbeing culture within SFRS;
- Cooperating with the SFRS to ensure Health and Safety Management Arrangements, as outlined within this document, are effectively implemented;
- Ensuring health and safety concerns and issues are reported in accordance with local meetings arrangements;
- Consulting with management on health and safety issues and concerns;
- Encouraging staff to cooperate and comply with Health and Safety Management Arrangements, e.g. Generic Risk Assessments (GRAs), SOPs, SSOW and other procedures in place for health and safety;
- Communicating health and safety critical information to staff appropriately; and
- Collaborating with the Safety and Assurance Function to continuously improve the health and safety performance and culture of the SFRS.

The SFRS will provide such facilities, training and assistance as Safety Representatives may reasonably require to perform their functions and in accordance with the SFRS Time Off for Trade Union Duties Policy.

5. PLANNING FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

Planning is essential to ensure that our health and safety arrangements are embedded into all aspects of service delivery. The planning process results in the identification of risk based priorities, setting key objectives, and reviewing lessons learned to continually improve performance.

The SFRS will:

- Ensure health and safety is considered in its strategic planning processes;
- Ensure that the Health and Safety Department is consulted at all stages of the development, review and implementation of working practices;
- Produce an annual Health and Safety Improvement Plan that identifies objectives that are realistic, measurable and achievable; and
- Develop and implement a management system that provides the SFRS with a suite of management tools to achieve legal compliance in relation to health and safety matters.

6. IMPLEMENTATION OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Safety and Assurance Function will liaise with Directorates and Service Delivery Areas to produce bespoke annual Health and Safety Improvement Plans that contribute to the overall achievement of the SFRS Health and Safety Improvement Plan. These plans will be delivered through a formalised meeting structure with the SACs, SALOs, Trade Unions and the Safety and Assurance Function.

7. MONITORING PERFORMANCE

To ensure active monitoring and highlighting of any areas for improvement within the management of health and safety across Directorates and Service Delivery Areas (SDA), the following will be implemented:

Directorate/SDA/Function

- Monitor the progress of their Health and Safety Improvement Plan and the effectiveness of any controls implemented;
- Scrutinise management information and identify any areas of good practice or areas for improvement; and
- Undertake inspections/audits to determine the effective application of the Health and Safety Management System and legislative compliance.

Safety and Assurance Function

- Actively engage with risk owners to assist in the completion of the SFRS Health and Safety Improvement Plan;
- Produce health and safety quarterly and annual performance reports for the SFRS;
- Promote thematic campaigns to raise awareness of identified risks;
- Develop training and awareness content for staff;
- Review operational debriefs and review analytical risk assessments;
- Undertake audits and inspections to determine the application of the Health and Safety Management System;
- Monitor all health and safety events; and
- Review and assure all aspects of operational activity across SFRS to influence future practices, enhance firefighter safety and improve performance in support of strategic objectives.

8. AUDIT

Formal audit arrangements are essential in identifying good practice and areas for improvement to ensure we are a learning organisation. Furthermore, they offer a structured means of evaluating SFRS compliance with its statutory duties.

The Safety and Assurance Function will undertake audits on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Health and Safety Management System.

OA will undertake audits of identified incidents and emerging trends from health and safety events that may impact within the operational environment.

Thematic audits may be undertaken by Health and Safety and/or OA as appropriate to any identified emerging risk or trends.

To ensure continual improvement, outcomes from audit processes will be reviewed and where required documents will be reviewed and actions added to the relevant Health and Safety Improvement Plan(s).

9. REVIEW

The SFRS is fully committed to continuous improvement of health and safety performance.

This Policy will be subject to review at no more than 5 yearly intervals or as a result of:

- Changes to existing or introduction of new legislation;
- Changes in technology;
- Changes to organisation of SFRS;
- Significant learning following implementation of SFRS health and safety arrangements;
- Significant learning following outcomes of major accident investigations;

- At the request of the HSE; and
- As a result of emerging research or guidance relating to SFRS health and safety matters.

All records of revisions to the Policy and Arrangements will be retained for future reference and subject to audit as required.

10. FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact the email address below for further information:

Health and Safety Department

SFRS.HealthandSafety@firescotland.gov.uk

11. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS / REFERENCES

Equality Impact Assessment – Health and Safety

Time Off for Trade Union Duties Policy

[DCLG, Fire and Rescue Authorities: Health, Safety and Welfare Framework for the Operational Environment, 2013](#)

[Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#)

[Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#)